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Abstract

Global education plays an increasingly important role in enriching students' learning experiences in US institutions of higher education. Students are connected to the world through global culture, economics, politics, technology and immigration. This paper examines the perceptions of 305 graduate students and alumni concerning the need for global education programs in the United States. Participants shared their views of the importance of global education in understanding today's economy, culture, and environment, while addressing our future needs and challenges. There were no significant statistical differences between the perceptions of graduate students and alumni or between those of international and American students in regards to the importance and benefits of global education.

International and Global Education

Dolby and Rahman (2008) described international education as "an umbrella" that covers the internationalization of higher education,[1] the expansion of international schools, and the globalization of education. McFadden, Merryfield, and Reeves-Barron (1997) explained that "International education provides knowledge, skills, and experiences that come from in-depth study, work, and collaboration in education in other countries and with immigrants and individuals from other countries who are residing in US communities" (p.8).

Since the inception of the École Internationale de Genieve (International School of Geneva) in 1924, educators have been trying to establish a teaching model that fosters a global citizenship paradigm (Mahlstdt, 2003)—a model that aims to create global citizens. In the US, such a model was not established until 1963, when the United World College of the Atlantic was founded.[2] Two decades later, in 1987, the European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students created ERASMUS, an international student exchange program to promote the internationalization of higher education. SOCRATES, a program associated with ERASMUS, facilitates the exchange of students within 30 European countries and is an example of the internationalization of education. More recently, global education has been focused on heightening students' awareness of their position within a global world and how they can contribute to the advancement of teaching and learing (Noddings, 2005). Many global education programs currently focus on topics such as world peace, nation building, poverty eradication, literacy, and gender equity (Bliss, 2010; Tye, 2003).

Knight (2004) envisioned global education as a field that integrates intercultural or global issues into curriculum, instruction, research, and services on college campuses. Similarly, Mahlstdt viewed global education as an education that "seeks to push students to expand their understanding of /and personal identification with geopolitical paradigms beyond the nation state, . . . necessarily [encouraging] some level of engagement with normative universal values, while simultaneously [engaging] . . . relativistic differences" (2003, p.6). In other words, global education develops the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are the basis for participation in a world characterized by cultural diversity, inequity, interconnectedness, cooperation, and conflict (McFadden, Merryfield, & Reeves-Barron, 1997, p.8). Global education entails the integration of international, intercultural, and global perspectives in curriculum, instruction, research, and services in higher education (Knight, 2004). Global education also contributes to mutual understanding among people, nations, and cultures; helps meet challenges of economic growth; and encourages greater student development and learning in an increasingly globalized world (de Wit, 2002). The British Council offers this definition:

> Global Education refers to the extent to which global development issues are integrated within the formal curriculum. Global education is seen as a way of extending students' views of the world by exploring their perceptions and connections. It helps them to recognize and think critically about different cultural, economic and political perspectives. Global education can be understood through four concepts that provide a conceptual framework for thinking about issues and activities within the curriculum: social justice and equity, diversity, sustainable development and globalization, and peace and conflict. ("What is Global," 2013, para. 1)

In institutions of higher education, global education is seen as including pragmatic, liberal, and civic elements (entailing a focus on global knowledge and skills, the

development of intercultural competence, and the obligations of a global citizenry, respectively) (Schechter,1993). Global education is also known as "global studies," "world studies," "international studies," or "international education," though there are variations among these areas. For instance, the main difference between global education and international education is that global education focuses on globally shared issues (i.e. those that are commonly relevant worldwide and are centered on the concept of connectedness or global connections) like the preservations of culture and the environment, the movements of people, and the effects of globalization, whereas international education examines educational institutions internationally— mainly with respect to the development of education, language, and culture (Bliss, 2010; Global Education, 2010; Pike, 1997). In light of these notions, the purpose of this paper was to study the perceptions of graduate students and alumni concerning the need for global education programs in the United States and to learn what such individuals thought of a global education program and how they perceived the relevance of such global education
programs in the 21St century.

Current Status of Global Education Programs

Many European countries have already prioritized the need for global education in their national educational policies. For instance, the Finnish Ministry of Education in 2010 introduced global education as a concept to be incorporated explicitly into curricula and implemented instructional approaches and activities within their national education policies that included standard objectives relating to global education in order to (1) guide students towards communal goal responsibility, (2) support growth in critical thinking, (3) promote inter-cultural dialogue and learning from one another, (4) help students see the earth as an entity with limited resources, and (5) increase the knowledge and skills that help students understand the global economy and its social and cultural ramifications. In recent years, diverse worldwide programs related to global education have been created at local and national levels in Canada, the United States, Mexico, India, and European countries. The Global Education Network Europe (GENE) is the largest such organization in Europe, and it includes projects such as KommEnt (Austria), InWent (Germany), Development Education (Ireland), and the Netherlands Committee for Sustainable Development (NCDO) (Netherlands), among others (Global Education, 2010).

In the past few decades, US institutions of higher education have rolled out several global education initiatives in the form of study abroad programs, international research opportunities, exchange programs, and international student programs (Knight, 2004; Siaya & Hayward, 2003), as increasing immigrant populations, diverse student communities, and threatening world events (such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks) have highlighted the need to expand global education. Despite the increased relevance of global education, however, some studies relating to global education and global studies programs in the United States have indicated that US professors do not see the benefits or advantages of global perspectives in their teaching and research and do not view such programs as mechanisms through which to challenge the worldviews of their students (Bond, 2003; Green & Olson, 2003).

Related Literature: Globalization, World Views, and Educational Trends

Global education is a widely acknowledged educational approach that "promotes open-mindedness leading to new thinking about the world and a predisposition to take action for change" (Quittner, 2008, p. 6). In the context of globalization, educators promote the values of global education that help learners take responsibility for their actions, respect and value diversity, and see themselves as global citizens to develop a sustainable world. Studies show that programs in global education help students and educators better understand human existence as well as the social, cultural, and economic representations of the world (Cobern, 1991; Lovett, 2008; Miller & West, 1993).

Students need strong analytical skills and worldviews to succeed in a global world. Based on students' social, cultural, and educational backgrounds, educators are encouraged to provide opportunities for students to challenge their existing views and perceptions about the world and educational systems (Global education, 2010). By understanding diverse worldviews[3] of human existence and civilization, students will be able to appreciate their racial and cultural identities, belief systems, values and orientations, and social connectedness (Goldhaber, 2000; Myer, 1993). Developing strong worldviews help graduates become critical thinkers and problem solvers and prepares them to be successful in a complex world. Global education can strengthen the worldviews of both students and teachers. Individuals who feel their attitudes and worldviews are threatened are motivated to commit violence, suicide, and acts of terror (Lieberman, Arndt, Personius, & Cook, 2001). In the last two decades, people across the globe have experienced challenges and threats to their worldviews, religious beliefs, and social behaviors. Terrorist attacks like the one on 9/11 of 2001 have resulted in the changing of attitudes of individuals vis-à-vis immigration, politics, religion, economics, and education.

The Need for Global Education

Students in American higher education come from diverse communities and are connected to the world by global culture, economics, politics, technology, and the immigration of others. The demographics and needs of college students are different today than they were in decades past because of increased migration and rising populations across the globe. Educators have realized the need for and importance of global education in understanding economy, culture, and environment and in addressing our future needs and challenges. According to a report published by the Asia Society:

> Across the United States, states are grappling with the question of how to produce workers who can promote global economy. A converging set of powerful economic, technological, demographic, and national security developments requires a citizenry and workforce that are far more internationally knowledgeable, competent, and adept in world languages and cultures — able both to compete and to collaborate internationally. Education is at the core of our response to globalization. ("Putting the World," 2010, p. 3)

To meet the demands of 21st century education, colleges and universities are not only expanding their campus facilities but are also making significant changes in curriculum and pedagogy. In Europe and Australia, programs related to global education are currently offered at all school levels. Likewise, the European Union has started its global education expansion through its Bologna process[4] for the international standardization of degree types. According to

Freedman (2010), BRICK nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China and Korea) have also made tremendous investment in higher education in order to become competitive in research and the global economy. In the Middle East, countries like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are rapidly building their higher education capacities in order to produce world-class research and technology. In South East Asia, Singapore is coming out as an educational hub for its technological integration and online teaching (Freedman, 2010).

Though global competence relies upon intercultural experiences as well as an appreciation for and exchange with other cultures (Hunter, White, & Godbey, 2006), educators have reported a limited appreciation for international cultures and low levels of intercultural exchange and among American students, who are also reported to lack global knowledge, attitudes, and skills for global competence compared to students from other parts of the world (Green & Olson, 2003). To address such limitations among American students, US institutions of higher education have implemented global education initiatives to enhance students' global competence. In the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia, initiatives of global education include study abroad programs, educational exchange programs, foreign aids, international student enrollments and international studies for faculty and students (Merkx, 2003, Tye, 2003). These countries are leaders in mobilizing educational resources and implementing initiatives for international students and scholars. The American Council on Education (ACE, 2005) has listed ten guidelines for increasing and promoting global education within the US educational system, among which are (1) developing student competence in at least one foreign language, (2) ensuring that students understand at least one foreign culture, (3) strengthening students' understanding of the global systems, (4) revising curriculum with respect to international understanding, (5) expanding study abroad programming, (6) increasing faculty development and rewards, (7) assessing international education, and (8) creating partnerships to improve capabilities and inter-institutional cooperation and partnership with local schools and communities.

Researchers have justified the need for global education or the "internalization" of higher education in order to strengthen economic development; the social, cultural, and academic skills of students; and the development of global competence among students (Knight & de Wit, 1997; McCarthy, 2007; Crawford & Kirby, 2008). Knight and de Wit (1997) outlined four main reasons for global initiatives in higher education, including the "preservation of national identity" (political), the "influence of a globalized labor market" (economic), the "need for quality education" (academic), and the "need to produce global, competent graduates" (cultural and social) (adopted from Francois, 2010, p. 71). As a part of such global initiatives, many US universities have extended their sister campuses and universities outside the US. In addition to expansion of their campus systems, these universities have also changed their academic and organizational structures to include international initiatives in curriculum development, language requirements, and greater diversity of faculty (Fischer, 2013, Green, 2002; Lovett, 2008). Despite these initiatives, however, Samlan (2012) assessed that many curricula in the United States still fail to present global perspectives, and he highlighted the need for increased foreign language study, cross-cultural awareness, and global connectedness of US students. Hannum and Buchmann (2003) also suggested the expansion and strengthening of the instruction of themes (from a social science perspective) that address social inequality (i.e. socioeconomics, gender, and ethnicity). They saw a need for expansions in curriculum, pedagogy, technology, and research at American schools and colleges in order to achieve some level of global competence among US students. Dirks (2012, para. 5) also stated, "It took a world war to propel Americans

to make a serious commitment to global study. It is time for us to engage directly the challenges we face introducing students to the complexities and overwhelming importance of global affairs."

Challenges and Issues in Global Educational Curriculum

Some studies have discussed the challenges of implementing global educational initiatives on US campuses. For instance, Anderson-Levitt (2003) studied both internal challenges (including the fear of different cultures, prejudices, and lack of motivation) and external challenges (such as lack of international support and lack of opportunity) facing faculty with respect to promoting global educational programs. In his study at four community colleges, Headrick (2003) cited the low prioritization of global education (manifested as a lack of institutional support for and limited funding of global education) as a major challenge to implementing global education programs within those schools. At the institutional level, studies have recommended the development of institutional support and international experience, the allocation of resources for diverse student and faculty, and the expansion of curriculum in order to create sustainable global education programs (Francois, 2010; Green & Olson, 2003; Headrick, 2003; Korbel & Halder, 2002).

Peters (2009) focused on using digital technologies to help both teachers and students develop "global perspectives" or "global awareness." Specifically, social media has enhanced students' knowledge and sharing of multimedia materials (videos, music, etc.) and has challenged the cultural and geographical barriers of students and teachers. Digital technology has also bridged the gap between the learners and teachers. Teachers can incorporate curriculum objectives of a global perspective in world history, social studies, and other disciplines using web-based technology. In teaching students about the "global village," Peters (2009) presented the ways teachers can expand their knowledge and awareness of the students through global networks such as iEarn, Global Schoolhouse, and ePals (web-based tools to support global learning). Lane and Kinser (2012) mentioned recent massive open online courses (MOOCs) offering global engagement for students and institutions as an "interest for global education and multinational universities" (para. 2). Through MOOCs, students from all over the world are able to earn a world class education in various disciplines.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was derived from the framework developed by Quittner (2008), which focused on how educators teach, what they teach, and what actions students take to engage in the global world. Quittner's framework outlined five elements or themes for integrating global perspectives within and across learning areas and provided advice for teachers and school leadership teams about how to implement the framework at the school level. His five learning themes within global education are (1) Interdependence and Globalization (an understanding of the complex social, economic and political issues), (2) Identity and Cultural Diversity (an understanding of self and one's own and others' cultures), (3) Social Justice and Human Rights (an understanding of the impact of inequality and discrimination), (4) Peace Building and Conflict Resolution (an understanding of positive and trusting relationships), and (5) Sustainable Futures (an appreciation for the quality of the environment). The model's spatial dimension suggests connections between local and global

communities, mostly in the form of global communities' interdependence on each other, while its temporal dimensions link past, present, and future global issues, providing students with opportunities to develop values, knowledge, skills, and actions that both encompass and reflect all of these concepts and themes. The authors of this study utilized the elements of Quittner's framework to guide the development of survey questions intended to gauge graduate students' and alumni's perceptions of the importance of global education in American higher education.
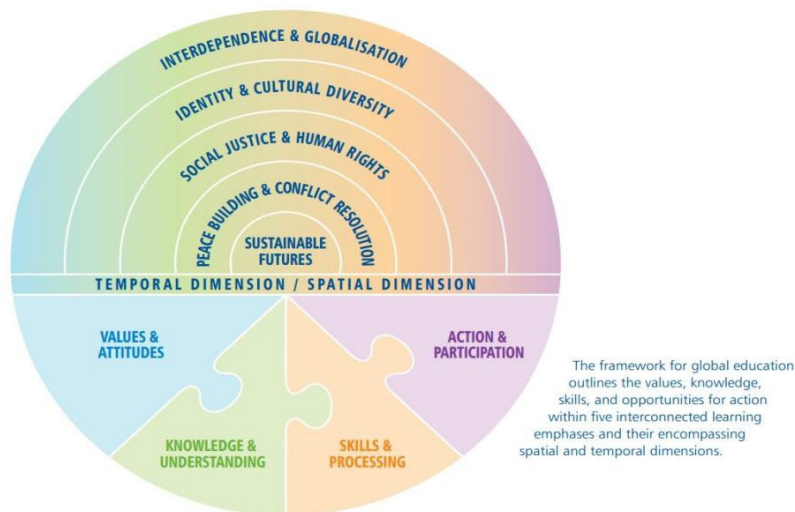

Figure 1. Global Education Framework.
Adopted with permission of the publishers from *Global Perspectives* (2008), p. 5.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of graduate students and alumni with respect to the need for and benefit of advanced global education programs in the United States. The following questions guided this study:
1. What are the general perceptions of graduate students and alumni for the need of an advanced global educational program?
2. Is there a significant difference in the perceptions for the need of an advanced global education program between (a) graduate students and alumni and (b) between international students and domestic students?
3. Is there a significant difference in the perceived benefits an advanced global education program between (a) graduate students and alumni, and (b) between international students and domestic students?

Methodology

A quantitative research design was used in this correlational study to examine the perceptions of graduate students and alumni about the need for a global education degree program within US higher education. A correlational study provides insights about the variables or groups of variables that are related to each other (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). The study does not show a causal relationship (i.e. one that predicts the cause and effect of variables). An online survey was administered to collect data from a sample of graduate students and alumni using

three list serves. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze data for this study. The data were examined for reliability (Chronbach's alpha) and normality (i.e. skewness and kurtosis). Correlation and analysis of variance (ANOVA) with a two-tailed alpha level of .5 were conducted to answer research questions of the study.

Participants

Upon approval by Institutional Review Board, an online survey questionnaire was distributed to a sample of individuals who were members of research organizations (e.g. the American Educational Research Association Graduate Studies (AERA-GS) and the Forum for Education Abroad Professionals) and to the alumni of a doctoral program in educational leadership at a Southern university in the United States. The AERA-GS list serve included about 2,270 (graduate student) subscribers from different US colleges and universities, and the electronic Forum for Education Abroad Professionals included 6,549 subscribers. The alumni list serve included 92 participants who had graduated from the educational leadership doctoral program at a Southern university and were currently employed by schools and colleges within the field of higher education. Data were collected in fall 2012 and spring 2013. There were 305 participants who took part in this study. Although the return rate of surveys was low (3.42%), the rate likely appears lower than it otherwise would, as the total number of list serve subscribers exceeded the number of currently active subscribers, thus artificially increasing the apparent possible total number of respondents. Since the list serves are not periodically updated, there is no valid way to obtain the actual number of active list serve members. For example, a graduate student listed on the AERA-GS list serve may have graduated years earlier and not provided an updated email address through which to be contacted. Likewise, the Forum for Education Abroad Professionals list serve likely included email address of members who are no longer active. No incentives such as gift cards or coupons for participants were offered to draw greater response.

Instruments

Based on existing literature and guided by the global education framework, we designed an instrument of 14 items in which 10 items were related to the perceptions of students regarding the need for and importance of global education (ranked on a Likert scale¸ 1 = *strongly agree*, 2 = *agree*, 3 = *disagree*¸ and 4 = *strongly disagree*) and in which three items were related to demographic variables such as status (graduate/alumnus), citizenship (international/American), and state of residence. Finally, one open-ended question asked participants to share additional comments. The scale aimed to measure the general perceptions of graduate students about the need for advanced global education programs at the post-secondary level. The internal reliability of the first ten items was checked, and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.89 was found, based on 305 responses. Additional measures were not taken to ensure the external and content validity.

Limitations

This study concerned the perceptions of graduate students and alumni working in the field of higher education regarding the need for global education programs within US institutions of higher education. Professionals working in education abroad programs in the United States also participated in this study. The study excluded faculty and undergraduate students. The study did not seek participants from outside the United States. Study findings may be limited because of the small sample size. Participants' gender and ethnicity were not identified. The findings could not be generalized to two-year post-secondary institutions. Additionally, the study is a correlational study (not a causal study) and does not include cross-sectional analysis for wider interpretation or generalization of the findings.

Results

Characteristics of Participants

A total of 305 responses were received from a population of 8,912 participants for the online survey, which was distributed via email. Of 305 participants, 165 (54.7%) participants identified themselves as graduate students, and 137 (45.4%) as alumni. Two hundred and seventy three participants (89.5%) were US students, and 32 (10.5%) were international students. Participants resided in various locations of the United States at the time of participation.

Research Question 1

What are the general perceptions of graduate students and alumni about the need for an advanced global educational program?

When 305 graduate students and alumni were asked about the need for a global education degree program, 70% reported positive agreement with the statements that "global education is important in the 21st century," "understanding the social and political issues that shape our world is crucial for all educators," "education curriculum must reflect our global world," and "including global issues in school curriculum, at all levels, will increase students' preparedness for 21st century" (Table 1). Similarly, 269 (89.6%) agreed that "including global issues in school curriculum at all levels will improve graduate's chances for employment." One hundred and eighty five (61.4%) participants reported that they would have earned an advanced degree in global education if they had been offered a chance, while 116 participants (38.5%) said that they would not have done so—though 167 respondents (55%) said they would opt to earn such a degree in the future if given the opportunity to do so. Nearly two thirds of all participants (72.7%, 219) agreed that global education would improve their chances for employment, compared to the 27.2% (82) who disagreed. Nearly 89% of the participants reported that offering an advanced degree (MA or PhD) in global education would enhance the image of the institution, and 85% opinioned that such degree would attract international students.

The mean scores of participants' general perceptions of the need for global education programs at the college level (Table 1) were above average in all items except for three items (specifically, those related to employment and the likelihood of the respondents having opted to pursue an advanced degree in global education if they had been given the opportunity to do so or their likelihood to pursue such a degree in the future).

Table 1.

Degree of Responses, Mean, and Standard Deviation on Items Related to Need for Global Education Program (N =305)

Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	M	SD
Global Education is very important in the 21st century.	**77.3%** **(235)**	20.7% (63)	1.0% (3)	1% (3)	1.26	.53
Understanding the social and political issues that shape our world is crucial for all educators.	**71.1%** **(217)**	27.5% (84)	0.7% (2)	0.7% (2)	1.31	.52
Educational curricula must reflect our global world.	**68.4%** **(208)**	28.6% (87)	2.3% (7)	0.7% (2)	1.35	.56
Including global issues in school curricula, at all levels, will increase students' preparedness for 21st century.	**65.5%** **(199)**	31.3% (95)	2.6% (8)	0.7% (2)	1.38	.57
Including global issues in school curricula, at all levels, will improve graduates' chances for employment.	**45.3%** **(136)**	44.3% (133)	7.7% (23)	2.7% (8)	1.68	.73
If I had been offered a chance to get an advanced degree in global education before I earned my degree, I would have chosen it.	31.2% (94)	30.2% (91)	**31.9%** **(96)**	6.6% (20)	2.13	.93
If I am offered a chance to earn an advanced degree in global education, I will take it.	32.0% (95)	24.2% (72)	**33.0%** **(98)**	14.8% (32)	2.21	1.00
I think a degree in global education would improve my chances for employment and/or advancement.	30.2% (91)	**42.5%** **(128)**	22.9% (69)	4.3% (13)	2.02	.84
Offering an advanced degree in global education would enhance the institution image.	39.1% (118)	**49.3%** **(149)**	10.9% (33)	0.7% (2)	1.73	.68
Offering an advanced degree in global education will attract international students.	**43.6%** **(130)**	40.9% (122)	14.8% (44)	0.7% (2)	1.73	.74

Note. M = Mean, *SD* = Standard Deviation. The highest score in each row are highlighted for clarity. The mean value was calculated on the Likert scale, where 1 = *Strongly Agree*, and 4 = *Strongly Disagree.*

Research Question 2

Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of the need for an advanced global education program between (a) graduate students and alumni, and (b) between international students and domestic students?

An Independent Samples Test (*t*-test) was performed to examine the difference between the perceptions of graduate students and alumni about the need for an advanced global education program. Table 2 shows that the perceptions of graduate students did not differ significantly from those of alumni on all five items regarding the need for a global education degree program.

Table 2.

Comparison of Graduate Students and Alumni on Need for Global Education Program (n = 165 graduate students and 137 alumni)

Item	M	SD	t	df	p
Global Education is very important in the 21st century			.01	303	.994
Graduate Student	1.26	.53			
An Alumnus	1.26	.52			
Understanding the social and political issues that shape our world is crucial for all educators			.72	303	.473
Graduate Student	1.33	.53			
An Alumnus	1.28	.50			
Educational curricula must reflect our global world			1.25	303	.214
Graduate Student	1.39	.58			
An Alumnus	1.31	.54			
Including global issues in school curricula, at all levels, will increase students' preparedness for 21st century			1.11	303	.266
Graduate Student	1.42	.56			
An Alumnus	1.34	.59			
Including global issues in school curricula, at all levels, will improve graduates' chances for employment			-.25	303	.804
Graduate Student	1.68	.66			
An Alumnus	1.69	.80			

A *t*- Test was performed to examine the difference between the perceptions of international students and domestic students (US citizens) regarding the need for and benefit of an advanced global education program. Table 3 shows that the responses of international graduate students did not differ significantly from those of domestic graduate students on all five items regarding the need for a global education degree program.

Table 3.

Comparison of International Students and Domestic Students' Perception of Need for Global Education Programs (n = 32 international students and 273 domestic students)

Item	M	SD	t	df	p
Global Education is very important in the 21st century			1.04 [a]	34.62[a]	.307
International Students	1.38	.71			
Domestic Students	1.24	.49			
Understanding the social and political issues that shape our world is crucial for all educators			.77	303	.440
International Students	1.36	.66			
Domestic Students	1.30	.50			
Educational curricula must reflect our global world			.26	303	.797
International Students	1.36	.66			
Domestic Students	1.35	.55			
Including global issues in school curricula, at all levels, will increase students' preparedness for 21st century			1.21	303	.226
International Students	1.50	.76			
Domestic Students	1.37	.55			
Including global issues in school curricula, at all levels, will improve graduates' chances for employment			.59 [a]	34.19[a]	.560
International Students	1.78	1.04			
Domestic Students	1.67	.68			

Note. [a] The *t* and *df* were adjusted because variances were not equal.

Research Question 3

Is there a significant difference in the perceived benefits of an advanced global education program between (a) graduate students and alumni and (b) between international students and domestic students?

There was no significant difference between the responses of graduate students and those of alumni on the two questions regarding their likelihood to have pursued a graduate degree in global education if they had been given a chance to do so or their likelihood to pursue such a degree in the future if given the opportunity to do so. A summary of the t-test results is included in Table 4. A *t-test* was performed to examine the difference between the perceptions of graduate students and alumni regarding the benefits of earning a degree from an advanced global education program.

Table 4.

Comparison of Graduate Students and Alumni on Whether They Would Pursue a Degree in Global Education (n = 168 graduate students and 137 alumni)

Item	M	SD	t	df	p
If I were offered a chance to get an advanced degree in global education before I earned my degree, I would have chosen it.			-.26	303	.793
Graduate Student	2.13	.93			
An Alumnus	2.15	.95			
If I am offered a chance to earn an advanced degree in global education, I will take it.			-.78	303	.438
Graduate Student	2.17	.98			
An Alumnus	2.26	1.04			

There was no significant difference between the responses of graduate students and those of alumni on the self-reported benefits of global education (including chances for employment, enhancement of institutional image, and international student enrollment) on three selected items.

Table 5.

Comparison of Graduate Students and Alumni on Benefits of Global Education Program (n = 168 graduate students and 137 alumni)

Item	M	SD	t	df	p
I think a degree in global education will improve my chances for employment			-1.14	303	.255
Graduate Student	1.97	.84			
An Alumnus	2.08	.84			
Offering an advanced degree in global education will enhance the institution image			.19	303	.843
Graduate Student	1.74	.68			
An Alumnus	1.72	.68			
Offering an advanced degree in global education will attract international students.			1.29	303	.195
Graduate Student	1.68	.73			
An Alumnus	1.78	.74			

A *t*-test revealed no significant difference between the responses of international graduate students and those of domestic graduate students in their perceptions regarding the benefits of earning an advanced global education degree (see Table 6).

Table 6.

Comparison of International Graduate Students and Domestic Graduate Students Responses to Whether They Would Pursue a Degree in Global Education (n = 32 international students and 273 domestic students)

Item	M	SD	t	df	p
If I had been offered a chance to get an advanced degree in global education, before I earned my degree, I would have chosen it.			-1.48	303	.139
International Students	1.90	1.06			
Domestic Students	2.16	.92			
If I were offered a chance to earn an advanced degree in global education, I would take it.			-1.45	303	.148
International Students	1.97	1.09			
Domestic Students	2.24	1.01			

Note. [a] The *t* and *df* were adjusted because variances were not equal.

Data analysis indicated no significant difference between the responses of international graduate students and those of domestic graduate students on the self-reported benefits of global education (with respect to chances for employment, enhancement of institutional image, and international student enrollment) on three selected items (See Table 7).

Table 7.

Comparison of International Graduate Students and Domestic Graduate on Benefits of Global Education Program (n = 32 international students and 273 domestic students)

Item	M	SD	t	df	p
I think a degree in global education will improve my chances for employment			-.12 [a]	35.86 [a]	.907
International Students	2.00	1.01			
Domestic Students	2.02	.82			
Offering an advanced degree in global education will enhance the institution image			-.38	303	.701
International Students	1.69	.82			
Domestic Students	1.74	.66			
Offering an advanced degree in global education will attract international students.			-.48 [a]	35.71 [a]	.631
International Students	1.66	.90			
Domestic Students	1.74	.71			

In an open-ended question, participants were asked to share their views of the need for and their potential interest in an advanced global education program. From 68 comments/suggestions, three categories of responses emerged: those that indicated a need for and/or recognized the importance of global education; those that indicated negative opinions

regarding global education; and those that demonstrated interest in and/or provided suggestions regarding global education programs. The comments best representing these three categories are included in the following section:

Need for/Importance of Global Education

"More than for economic survival, global education makes us more sensitive and respectful of differences. In an age where populations are more and more mobile, it is necessary to know about cultures, traditions, practices, and beliefs around the world."

"The US curriculum is very deficient in this regard, beginning with the lack of multiple languages available in primary classrooms. A fundamental shift in how we value cultural difference needs to occur (and is - very slowly), but we are still dealing with the legacy of assimilation policies inherited by ""majority"" teachers who now are, in fact, the minority - yet operate from an outdated paradigm."

"I think the need for a global education has become a hot topic in recent years. National standards have facilitated this discussion. I would argue that there is also a significant need for students in the US to gain a better understanding of who we are as a nation - past and present. This should not be sacrificed so that we can learn how to better appreciate others. I know the workplace is changing, and we now work with individuals from all over the world, but we must understand who we are both as individuals and as a nation, if we hope to understand how we impact and interact with others. The thought of providing a global education for our students is being considered at all levels. A global education should never cause us to forget about what has made this country so special. We are "arguably" a world superpower for some reason."

"I think that international education is very important; however, whether or not the majority of people believe in this importance is up for debate. I think that people are too nationalist and do not understand the importance of learning about other cultures, which is sad."

Negative Opinions about Global Education

"At our institution, we are eliminating the global education program, as it is not valued. The future of the discipline is very much in doubt."

"Just completed my degree in Global education. Has not appeared as an area/field in the academic job market. Focus appears to be on MCE, Literacy, TESOL, and STEM."

"A MA or PhD in Global/International Education is completely irrelevant to the real world outside. The survey is wrongly worded. There are NO careers in global education except an understanding of the world around us, which one can get from the restructuring of all the other degrees. In other words, there is NO added value to having such a degree."

"I think a global education degree could be interesting, so long as the developers and instructors actually represent global diversity, and the program is not centered solely around the host institution's culture. I think it would be a fascinating study, which coincides with my own background and interests; however, I do not see how it could easily tie into advantages in terms of employability."

"This will be attractive to students, but this is still a very highly specialized field. Campuses have international offices, but their Directors/VP etc. are likely to have more traditional academic degrees. There could be limited chances for upward mobility for someone with this ""new"" type of degree."

"Global Education Reform Movement is spreading like a virus internationally and ruining every school that it touches. Schools in other countries that adopt any part of the so called reform system of the US will be negatively affected."

Interests/Suggestions in Global Education Programs

"Global education is very relevant because it will help ___university graduates do better in global competition. I hope that ___university will start offering this advanced degree."
  "Students who have graduated from the current doctoral program should be given an opportunity to take courses in Global Education and convert their degree to a Ph.D. If those courses were offered online, so out-of-state graduates could take them, I would register tomorrow!"
  "I hold a Ph.D. in German Literature from _____University and have worked in the international office for more than 20 years. Adding Global Education perspectives to existing graduate programs would be my preference."
  "International students may be interested in an international degree only if they know what it is, how it can translate to their needs in their own country, and it will strongly depend on whether or not the program curriculum has an international presence or reputation."
  "This is an emerging field, and one in which many students are beginning to find their niche. It will be of interest to more colleges and universities to offer these types of advanced programs to serve the demand as well as provide an upper-level outlet for long-time practitioners and scholars to serve as the educators themselves."
  "While I wholeheartedly believe a graduate program in global education would be beneficial. It would depend on the focus of the curriculum as to whether I would have pursued it or not or would consider it a value-added program to an institution."

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of graduate students and alumni regarding the need for a global education degree program. As Knight (2004) pointed out, global education programs within institutions of higher education help develop the international reputations of the institutions that offer them and result in higher levels of productivity in research and teaching. Supporting Knight's assertion, the graduate student and alumni respondents surveyed in this study agreed on the positive benefits of global education, and they reported a need for graduate programs in global education. Quitter (2008) said, global education is "a dynamic and evolving field." Participants in this study likewise acknowledged that global education is important in the 21st century. Participants also agreed that global education curricula from elementary schools to the college level would help prepare students to understand the global world.
  Participants of this study—both graduate students and alumni—expressed strong opinions regarding the need for and importance of global education programs at the university level. Both domestic and international students reported positive attributes of global education. Participants shared the perceived value of global education with respect to the development of a sense of belonging to the global community and responsibility towards people and the environment. Graduate student participants in this study also showed positive perceptions and noted an urgent need for the development of global programs at the college and university levels.

This study confirmed the findings of previous studies regarding the need for education that develops globally competent citizens (Francois, 2010; Knight, 2005; Olson, Green, & Hill, 2006). Very few participants expressed concerns about the employment[5] opportunities for graduates of such programs, though some shared their preference that global education be incorporated into existing programs rather than created as a new program.

There were no significant differences in responses among participants—neither between international and American graduate students nor between graduate students and alumni. These results can be due to the fact that all participants were studying or working in the education field and were aware of the importance of global education and the need to prepare students for an interconnected world. Future studies should include a wide variety of participants who represent different fields. Despite the similarity of responses, the results of this study clearly indicate a great interest both among graduate students and alumni in the field of global education. Higher education institutions must provide programs in global education or at least incorporate concepts of global education in their existing programs to better provide their students with the skills that will make them competitive upon graduation. Institutions also must not only prepare their faculty to include global issues in their courses but also seek to employ faculty members who are competent in global issues related to their fields.

In an era of globalization, educational systems are experiencing increasing pressure to educate and produce globally competent citizens (Francois, 2010). Educators at institutions of higher education believe that their research and teaching should focus on the social and intellectual development of students in order to address domestic and global issues (Francois, 2010). International business networks, national and transnational capital structures, and advances in technology and communications have been reshaping the world. As such, educators have recognized a need for the implementation of a different set of skills within curricula in order to prepare students to compete in the global market, culture, and business (Siaya & Hayward, 2003); indeed, educators are urged to develop among their students 21st century skills in order to produce and mobilize worldwide labor and resources. Within this context, American students are currently characterized as "immobile," and global education would help US students increase their intercultural competence and better articulate their understanding of global issues (Jones & de Wit, 2012).

Conclusion

Global education is an emerging field of education. The existing literature related to global and international education and the findings from this study suggest that there is a need for such programs in American higher education.[6] Global education is gradually being incorporated into educational curricula at colleges and universities in the US and Europe. However, there are limited colleges and universities in the world that offer the study of global education as a degree program. In the United States, some colleges have started offering global education as a college minor, and even fewer universities teach global education as a graduate degree program.

Quittner (2008, p. 4) asserted that "with its emphasis not only on developing knowledge and skills but also on promoting positive values and participation, global education is relevant across all learning areas and all stages of learning." Participants of this study supported such a contention. They also acknowledged that global education is not only about global themes or world problems; it is a way of thinking and improving life conditions for all. The findings of this study supported an earlier argument that global education should be about "connecting local and

global perspectives and how to make this vision real and possible, starting from our own small spot in the world" (Global education, 2010¸ p. 14). While a few participants shared their personal experiences and frustration with respect to the lack of global education programs and opportunities to engage in global initiatives at the university setting, most respondents indicated positive response regarding the need for a graduate program in global education. As such, US colleges and universities should develop skills and resources for social, cultural, and economic expansions so that students and teachers can engage in world class experience. This study examined general perceptions of graduate students and alumni about the need for global education programs. The authors recommend that researchers include a wide range of student groups in their future research. Future studies that include the perspectives and perceptions of both students and teachers and case studies with in-depth interviews or measures of success of existing global education programs will add valuable information to the body of literature on global education.

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[1] The desire to internationalize education, especially higher education, can be traced back to medieval Europe. Erasmus of Rotterdam (1465-1536), a philosopher and theologian traveled and taught at universities all over Europe (Mahlstdt, 2003).

[2] Though some initiatives in international education in the US predate this, De Witt (2002) asserted that international education after WWII was mainly geopolitical, with both the US and Soviet Union using it as a means to expand their regional influences. Nonetheless, legitimate attempts to internationalize education were emerging; in 1948, for example, the National Association of Foreign Students Advisors (NAFSA) was established ". . . to provide a professional organization, training, and development of the advisors responsible for a growing population of international students on US campuses" (Mahlstdt, 2003, p.1).

[3] Worldviews are the assumptions people make about themselves and others when thinking about and/or interacting with others and the world; worldviews also affect the ways in which individuals view themselves. Worldviews can influence human behavior and attitudes in positive and negative directions. Researchers see worldview as a concept that represents an individual's implicit understanding of self, universe, and interrelations with others; as a result of worldviews, individuals make active meanings of their social interactions (Geertz, 1977; Goldhaber, 2000).

[4] Launched in 1999, the Bologna Process is an important process of harmonizing various systems of European higher education that has the objective to promote the European system of higher education on a worldwide scale in order to increase its international competitiveness. The Declaration of Bologna was signed by the Ministers of Education from 29 European countries in 1999 (Bologna Process, 2014).

A quick survey of the job listings webpage on the Chronicle of Higher Education yielded five listings in one week for opportunities in comparative/global/international education. Another quick survey of ten top universities' mission statements found all of such institutions had a reference to preparing their students for a global world as a priority.

[6] A critical question is whether educators and policy makers will address the need for global education programs at all school levels.

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